



More Than You Can Handle: Mystery | May 29, 2019

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Sometimes things need to break for them to get better. We don't like to admit it because we don't like broken things. But what if God does amazing things with broken people?

Key Verses

Daniel 3:16-26 (NIV)

"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.' Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, 'Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?' They replied, 'Certainly, Your Majesty.' He said, 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.' Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, 'Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!'"

Discussion

In Japanese culture, there is a well-known and practiced art called "kintsugi," where people repair broken pottery with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver or platinum. In the process of rebuilding the broken pottery, it not only becomes more beautiful in appearance, but also ends up being worth more as well. The piece tells a better story, one of both its original design, as well as the careful and intentional practice of putting it back together in an even more creative and striking way. Our faith actually works in a similar way, although most of us don't like it to.

1. Have you ever put something back together, only to make it even more beautiful and unique? Explain.
2. How do you think the art of "kintsugi" is similar to our faith and the hard things we go through in life?

In his book, *More Than You Can Handle*, Nate Pyle talks about the mystery of brokenness and how it can actually make us better, stronger and more beautiful. He claims that our circumstances should not define whether or not we trust God, only inform it. When something breaks in our lives, instead of choosing to turn away or be silent, we should instead be asking ourselves how we can make that thing better. We should choose to trust that God can rebuild anything into something that's better for us in the long run.

3. What is your immediate response when you face trial and difficulty in life? Do you tend to trust God or turn your back on him?
4. Why is it difficult for us, when we are in the middle of pain and suffering, to trust that God has the bigger picture in mind and will use the suffering for our good?

In Daniel 3:16-26, we read the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They are about to be thrown into a furnace and claim that God will deliver them from it. If we are being honest, most of us do this or desire this when faced with extreme difficulty or pain. We simply want God to take it away or prevent it from happening. But they still end up getting thrown into the furnace. And this happens in our lives as well. We all face extreme difficulty we wish God would have helped us avoid. What if instead of losing faith or trust in God during those seasons, we started to see them as an opportunity for God to rebuild something in us that's even stronger and more beautiful?

5. When is a time in your life that you asked God to remove pain and suffering in your life?
6. When is a time in your life that God didn't remove pain and suffering, but that you can now say in hindsight caused you to grow in ways you couldn't have without it?

What's Next?

The truth is that God rarely deals with pain and suffering through avoidance. He won't simply save us from it all of the time, but he will save us through it. In 2 Corinthians 4:7, we read that all of us as Christ followers have a light shining in our hearts. But we, as humans, are like fragile clay pots. We can break, and we probably will. When we believe that God should simply save us from all suffering, it's impossible for us to comprehend how we could survive and walk forward when we do experience brokenness. The truth is, the fact that we can be broken and are broken is where the power of God is displayed.

This week, as you live out and engage your faith, lean on God to make you better as a result of your difficulties, not in the absence of them.